

Facts About Low Birth Weight Infants

1. A low birth weight infant is any baby born weighing less than 2500 grams (5.5 pounds).
2. Low birth weight is the most common cause of serious illness among newborn infants.
3. Even with extraordinary care, low birth weight infants lives are threatened by such problems as frequent brain bleeds, inadequately developed lungs, poor body temperature control, and malfunctions of the liver.
4. If they survive, low birth weight infants have a higher than average likelihood of having such serious health problems as birth defects, heart disease, mental deficiencies, poor nervous system development and susceptibility to infections.
5. Smoking, drugs, poor nutrition, and stress are all factors that significantly increase a pregnant woman's chances of having a low birth weight infant
6. Intensive hospital care required by a low birth weight baby typically exceeds \$50,000.
7. Care of the smallest babies, requiring the longest hospitalization, can cost as much as \$150,000.
8. Low birth weight infants represent about 7% of the babies born in the U.S. each year.
9. Because they are likely to have disabilities children who were low birth weight infants require greater than normal community and school resources for their education.
10. The yearly federal budget for the education of disabled children is about \$2 billion.